



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE LUIS R. GARCIA, JR. FILES HOUSE BILL 765 COMBATING THE UNLAWFUL SLAUGHTER OF HORSES

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – There has been a substantial increase in the unlawful slaughter of horses recently in the State of Florida and particularly in Miami-Dade County. These horses are being slaughtered in connection with the illegal sale of horse meat.

State Representative Luis Garcia (D-Miami) and State Senator Victor Crist (R-Tampa) have joined together and filed HB 765 to combat this growing problem.

House Bill 765 provides a greater deterrent to the illegal slaughter and sale of horse meat by increasing the penalties and imposing mandatory minimum sentences.

The legislation increases the criminal penalty to a third degree felony and imposes a mandatory minimum fine of \$3,500 and a minimum period of incarceration of One year for the killing of a horse in violation of this statute.

HB 765 also expands the scope of the statute to include any person who knowingly transports, distributes, sells, purchases or possesses horse meat that is not clearly stamped, marked and described as horse meat for human consumption or horse meat which has not been acquired from a legally licensed slaughterhouse.

Additionally, House Bill 765 authorizes local governments to revoke or suspend local business licenses of restaurants, stores or other businesses after being convicted of violating this statute and expands scope to include all horses not just recognized breeds and hybrids.

Criminals are profiting from this misconduct. A full-sized horse can provide more than 300 pounds of meat on the black market, and horse meat sells for as much as \$40 per pound.

Representative Garcia stated, "If they want to steal and kill our horses then we will take their livelihoods and possibly their freedom." Garcia went on to say, "In the old west they used to hang horse thieves. We no longer practice vigilante justice, nor am I advocating as such, but I will not sit back any longer and let this horrendous crime continue."

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